

A  
CHECK  
TO AN  
Ungovern'd  
TONGUE.

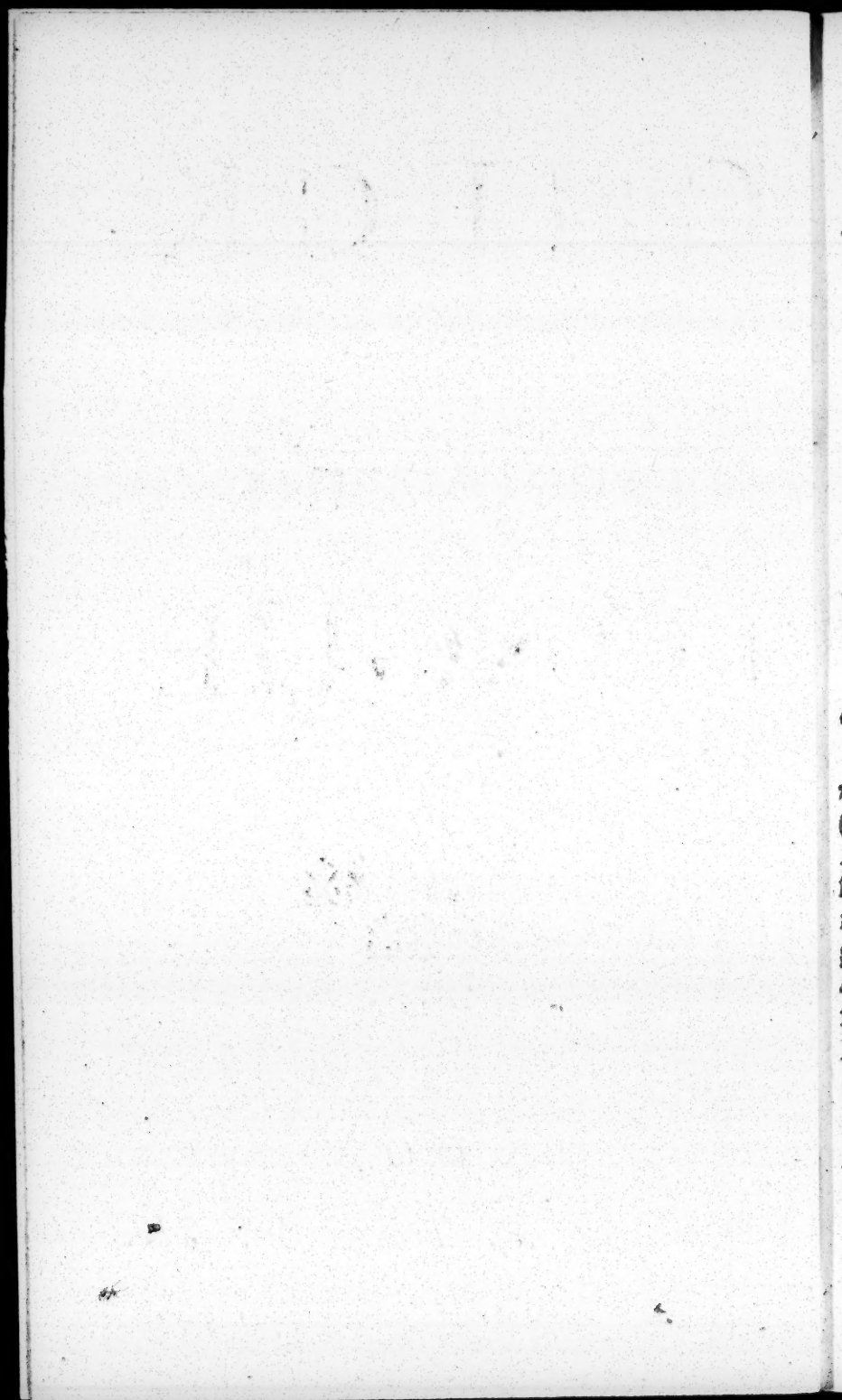
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L O N D O N :

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A

## CHECK

T O A N

## UNGOVERN'D TONGUE.

**T**HE Criminal we are now dealing with, is pronounc'd by an Inspired Writer, *An unruly Evil, full of deadly Poyson, Jam. 3. 8.* And (which is a very great Discouragement to any Attempt for the Reformation of it) it is there said, *That the Tongue can no Man tame:* Which is not design'd to speak it impossible for Men to govern *their own* Tongues, but to speak it extreamly difficult, and next to impossible, to reclaim and reform the Extravagances of other People's Tongues. And yet tho' *no man can tame this unruly Evil*, doubtless, the Almighty Grace of God can. *With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible;* even this. And that Grace, tho' us'd to any Methods in its Operations, yet ordinarily makes use of the Endeavours of Men, as Means to accomplish and effect its Purposes.

Against this *Goliath* therefore, we go forth to Battle, tho' arm'd only with a Sling and a Stone, in the Name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel, whom it hath defied; leaving the Success of the Attempt to him that made man's mouth, and is alone able to now make it, as he certainly doth, wherever he gives a new Heart.

And we will first instance particularly in the most common and daring Exorbitants of an Ungovern'd Tongue, and severally shew the Evil of them, designing and endeavouring thereby to confirm the Innocent, and especially to reform the Guilty: And then, we will in some general Directions, offer something towards the Cure of these Epidemical Diseases. And God grant that this Labour may not be altogether in vain!

First, *Prophane Swearing* is one of the common Transgressions, or Rebellions rather, of an ungovern'd ill-govern'd Tongue. A Sin so common, that in most Places it is become the vulgar Dialect of all sorts of Persons, with whose poysonous Breath the Air it self seems to be infected; and yet a Sin so exceeding sinful, that the Tongue is therein set against the Heavens, (Psalm. 73. 9.) insults over and tramples upon that which is most Sacred and Honourable.

The Malignity of this Sin lies especially in the prostituting of that solemn Appeal, which by an Oath is made to God's Knowledge and Justice, to the most impertinent and trivial Purposes. Devout and Religious Swearing, when we are duly call'd to be sworn, is an Ordinance of God, whereby we give unto him the Glory due unto his Name, as an Omniscient, True, and Righteous God



God. Profane Swearing is a scornful and insolent Contempt of that Ordinance, treading it under foot, as a common thing, and thereby doing despite to him, for whose Honour it is intended. It is a Sacrilegious alienating of those Forms of Speech which are consecrated to the Glory of God, and turning them to a profane and wicked Use; like *Belsazzar's* polluting the Vessels of the Temple, by gracing his Drunken Revels with them, which fill'd the Measure of his Iniquity. It is trifling and jesting with that, which in its own Nature is Awful and Reverend; and which ought at all times to be treated and attended to with the greatest Seriousness.

Some accustom themselves wholly to this Language of Hell; all their Discourse is corrupted by it. They cannot talk with you about Business, nor tell you a Story, nor give you an Answer to the most common Question, but almost every other Word must be an Oath. 'Tis so familiar to them, that it passes altogether unregarded; charge them with it, and they'll tell you in the next Breath, they do not know that they Swore.

Others, with whom it is not altogether so common, yet think it no harm now and then when they are in a Passion, or speak earnestly, or when they are in Company with those to whom they know it is agreeable, to rap out an Oath, (as they call it) and perhaps, to multiply Oaths; and by these frequent Acts, at length they contract a Habit, and become as bad as the worst, it may be: Some swear under pretence of gaining Credit, no body will believe them unless they swear what they say; and I know no Wise Man will believe them the sooner for it; for he that can dispense with the Sin of profane Swearing

Swearing, which he gets nothing by, I fear will not *boggle* much at the Sin of wilfull Lying; especially when any thing is to be got by it. Others swear under pretence of *striking an Awe* upon their Interiours, no body will fear them unless they *swear at them*; that is, they would rather be dreaded and *shunn'd*, as *roaring Lions and ranging Bears*, than Respected and Honoured as Wise, sober and Religious Men, that make Conscience of what they say and do, even, when they are never so much provok'd.

And there are many who are such hearty well-Wishers to this Sin, that tho' they have not yet learn'd to *swear distinctly*, and in *plain English*, for fear of the Censure, either of the Law, or of their Friends, or of their own Consciences; yet they venture to *lisp* this Language, and have the *Sibboleth* of an Oath, upon every Occasion, at their Tongues End; tho' it be not Swearing at large, and in expresse Terms, 'tis the Abridgement of it; 'tis swearing in Short-Hand: They have learnt to contract *wicked Words*, and to disguise them by *Half-Words*, which, as they have the Resemblance of prophane Swearing, take Rise from it, and border upon it, are *ill Words*, and at the best, are *idle Words*, for which they must give Account in the Judgment; and being *more than yea, yea, and nay, nay*, more than bare Affirmations and Negations, they *come of Evil*. Mar. 5. 37. No wise Man will say he *knows* not What, or that which hath *no Sense* at all; and no good Man will say that which he *knows* has the Appearance of Evil, and borders upon an *ill Sense*.

And now, O that this Paper might seasonably fall into the Hands of the Swearer, the common Swearer, and the more cautious one, and might

(by

(by the Blessing of God) be an effectual and happy Means to convince and reform both the one and the other, before the *flying Roll* which carries the Curse, (which we read of as the Swearer's Doom, *Zech. 5. 3, 4.*) come into their Houses, or which is worse, into their Souls, to consume them; that's a Roll which cannot be slighted and thrown by, as I suppose this Paper will.

You ask sometimes what Evil there is in swearing? Why so much ado should be made about a common Form of Speech, and a Man made an Offender for a Word? You plead, That it hurts no body, Words are but Wind.

But you will not say so, if you can but be persuaded seriously to weigh the following Considerations, and to fix them in your Minds.

I. Consider what an Enmity there is, in profane swearing to the Bless'd God, and what an Indignity is done by it to his Glorious and Fearful Name. Would it not be justly interpreted a very high Affront to a Magistrate, tho' a Man like your selves, if you should send for him in all hast to keep the Peace, to decide a Controversy, to seize a Criminal, or to do any Act of his Office; and when he comes, 'tis all *ludicrous*, and a Jest, and you intend nothing but to make a Fool of him, and to expose him and his Authority to Contempt and Ridicule? How would such an intolerable Abuse be resented among Men, especially, if it were oft repeated? Yet just such an Affront, a daring Affront, doth the intolent Swearer put upon God Almighty; making his Truth, Justice and Omniscience to attend all the Extravagances of an ungovern'd Passion, and an unbridl'd Tongue.

And

And the Affront is so much the worse, because it reflects upon his Government, prophanes his Crown, *disgraceth the Throne of his Glory*, vilifies his Judgment Seat, and attempts to make it mean and contemptible, and thereby to render it questionable.

And is there no harm in this? Whence can this proceed but from that *Carnal Mind which is Enemy against God*, and from a rooted Antipathy to him, and to his Dominion. To this poysonous Fountain the *Psalmist* traceth all these bitter Streams, *Plal. 139. 20. Thine Enemies take thy Name in vain. It cannot be imputed either to the Lusts of the Flesh, or the Lusts of the Eye, or the Pride of Life*; this is a forbidden Fruit that is neither good for Food, nor pleasant to the Eye, nor at all to be desired to make one wise, or bespeak one so; the Sinner is not led to it by the Love of Pleasure, or the hope of any Gain or Reward; it can therefore proceed from nothing else but a *Spirit of Contradiction to God Almighty*, a Contempt of his Honour, and a Hatred of his Government. This Sin, as much as any other, seems to have taken occasion from the Commandment, and to have put forth it self purposely in defiance of the Divine Law; so that it may be question'd whether there would have been such a Sin as prophane Swearing, if it had not been prohibited by the Third Commandment. Now this renders the Sin exceeding sinful, and adds Rebellion to it; and the Swearer being a Transgressor without Cause, (as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Plal. 25. 3.*) is a Sinner without Excuse, and sins purely for sinning sake.

This is excellently well express'd by our Divine Poet, Mr. Herbert.



Take not his Name, who made thy Mouth, in vain,  
It gets thee nothing, and hath no Excuse:  
Lust and Wine plead a Pleasure, Avarice, Gain,  
But the cheap Swearer, thro' his open Sluce,  
Lets his Soul run for nought, as little fearing,  
Were I an Epicure, I could hate Swearing.

And thinkest thou this, O Man, whoever thou  
art that thus affrontest the Majesty, ridiculest the Go-  
vernment, and defiest the Judgment of the Eter-  
nal God, that thou shalt go unpunished? Be not  
deceived, God is not mocked. He is jealous for the  
Honour of his own Name, and will not see it  
trampled upon and made a By-Word, as it is by  
every prophane Swearer. You would resent it,  
if your Names should thus be turn'd into a Pro-  
verb, and jested with by every idle Fellow: And  
what then will God do for his Great Name,  
which is thus abused? Shall he not rise for these  
things? Shall not his Soul be avenged on such Sinners  
as these? Yes, no doubt, when the Day of Re-  
compense comes: For, he hath said, *Vengeance is  
mine, I will repay. Nemo me impune lacesset.*

2. Consider what an Evillence it is against your  
selves, that you have no Fear of God before your  
Eyes. Tho' you should indeed neither fear God  
nor regard Man, yet why should you hang out a  
Sign to give notice of this to every one that  
passeth by? What need you declare your sin as  
Sodom, and thus publicly proclaim the Devil King  
in your Souls? Is it not enough that you harbour  
In your Hearts a secret Enmity to God and  
Godliness, but dare you thus ~~arouse~~ the Quarrel, and  
openly wage War with Heaven? Dare you thus  
bid defiance to all that's Sacred, and wear the  
Livery of Satan's Family? Is it not enough that  
your



your Hearts are Graceless, and you your selves in the Interest of the Kingdom of Darknes, but you must be industrious to let the World know this: *Thy Wisdom fails thee*, indeed, if (like the Fool, *Se'mon* describes) when *thou walkest by the way*, thou thus *sayest to every one that thou art a Fool.* Eccl. 10. 3.

Shall I beg of you to consider this a little; You are called Christians; your Baptism, which I take it for granted you have not renounc'd, intitles you to that worthy Name; you live in an Age and Place wherein it is your Honour to be call'd by that Name; 'twill do you neither Credit nor Kindness to have your Christianity *disproved*; nay, you would take it as an Affront to have it *question'd*; this you would have look'd upon as a thing so certain, that *as I am a Christian* must pass for an Oath with you, or vehement Assertion; which gives just Cause to suspect that you have little value for your Christianity, since you are so willing to *pawn it*, as you do other Sacred Things, upon every trifling Occasion. But while thus you boast of your Christianity, you do with your own Tongues *disprove it* by your common swearing, and plainly give your selves and your Profession the Lye. *Out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaks.* I see not how it is possible that such a daring Contempt of God's Sovereign Authority and Sacred Name, as prophane Swearing (especially where it is commonly us'd) most certainly is, can consist with the reigning Fear and Love of God in the Heart, and that sincere Regard to the Glory and Honour of God, which are necessary to denominate a Man a true Christian.

When *Peter* was charg'd with it as a Crime, that he was a Disciple of Christ, he took this Method to  
make

make it appear that he was not, he *began to curse and to swear*, Mat. 26. 74. His *Speech* indeed *bewray'd* him to be a *Galilean*; But this manner of *Speech* bewray'd him to be none of the Followers of Christ, for none of them us'd to *curse and swear*; all that knew anything of their Master, and his Life and Doctrine, would certainly conclude so. When *Peter* therefore *curs'd and swore*, he did as effectually deny his Master, as when he said, *I know not the Man*: These are none of the Spots of God's Children. 'Twas but once that *Peter* was thus guilty, and many a bitter Tear it cost him; let none therefore make *Peter's* Example an Excuse for their *Swearing*, unless they intend, as he did, to signify thereby that they disown Christ and their Christianity; and since they are resolv'd not to be rul'd by their Religion, they *disclaim* all Hopes of Benefit by it. I have that Charity for you, as to believe that you will not do this *professedly*, and therefore you should be so just to your selves as not to do that which amounts to it, and which is capable of such a Construction, and which the Apostle tells us, endangers our falling into Condemnation. Jam. 5. 12. While there is a possibility of your being *Heirs of Heaven*, and of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, prove not your selves the *Children of Hell*, by your speaking the Language of that Kingdom of Darkness.

3. Consider what an Injury it is to those with whom you converse. You think it doth no harm to others, because it doth not hurt them in their Bodies, Goods, or good Name; but is Harm done to the Souls of others no Harm? Nay, is it not the worst Harm you can do them? If these that hear you swear be *wicked*, their Hearts are hardened by it, and their Hands strengthened, that they may not turn from their evil way; from your *poisonous Breath* they take their Infection, and add this to all their other Sins. And is it no Harm to propagate Sin, and to support the Devil's Interest,

terest, as his Agents, and Factors for Hell? Yes, it is Harm to *them* who are thus, by your Means, instructed and confirm'd in Wickedness; and you will find it Harm to *you* too, when you shall bear the Iniquity of those that by your *Example* are taught, and encourag'd to swear. To what a Heighth will your Account rise, when you shall be to answer for all the Sins you have thus been accessory to? Which, tho' it aggravate your Sin, yet will not excuse those who have learnt this Ill from you, nor lessen their Account; for they also shall *die in their Iniquity*.

If they that hear you swear have the Fear of God in their Hearts, and any Concern for his Glory, their Hearts are *grieved*, and their Hands *weakned*. It may be, they have not Courage to reprove you for it, but it troubles them, and saddens their Spirits to hear God's Name dishonoured, and his Sovereignty thus insulted, and to see you thus sell your Souls and all your valuable Birth-Rights for less than a morsel of meat. It spoils the Pleasure of their Conversation with you, makes 'em *shy* of your Company, and perhaps, *dull* and *uneasy* in it; such an Affliction it is to them to hear you swear. When only David had mentioned those that take God's Name in vain, he immediately adds, *Do not I hate 'em, am not I griev'd because of 'em?* Psal. 139. 20. Tho' now, perhaps, you make a light Matter of this, and rather take a Pride and Pleasure in thus creating Vexation to a good Man; yet shortly you will find it had been better a Mill-stone were hang'd about your Neck, and you cast into the Sea, than that you should wilfully offend one of Christ's little ones. They are the Words of our Lord Jesus, and we are sure no Word of his shall fall to the Ground.

Besides this, Is it no Harm to bring the Curse of God into your House, which shall consume it? Is it  
no

no Harm to add to the measure of the Nation's Guilt, and to increase God's Controversy with it. *Because of Swearing the Land mourns*, (Jer. 23. 10.) the Land of your Nativity, and is it nothing to you that you contribute to its Grief, and to the *Reproach* which this, as other *Sins*, puts upon any *People*? Prov. 14. 34.

4. Consider, *How very frivolous all your Pleas in Defence of this Sin are, and how unbecoming one that pretends Reason.* When your own Consciences sometimes rebuke you for it, and admonish you to reform, you shift off these Convictions with such trifling Excuses as you would be ashamed to offer in any other case.

I cannot think of more than two Things you can alledge in your own Defence, and they have neither of them so much as the colour of an Excuse, while there is all that intrinsic Malignity in the Sin which we have already shew'd you, and God hath declared he will not hold you guiltless.

(1.) You urge, *That it is what you have been long accustomed to, and you cannot leave it off.* But this cannot make it *lawful*, no not tho' the Custom were of so early a Date, that you were taught to swear, as soon as you were taught to speak; for tho' we brought Sin into the World with us, that doth not make it the less sinful: Though it be bred in the Bone, it must be forsaken, or it will be our Ruin. If it be absurd to alledge a *Prescription* against a *Record*, in Humane Courts, much more to alledge it against a Divine Law. If a Thief has been accustomed to stealing, or an Assassin to Blood and Murder, that will be so far from justifying their Villanies, that it will justly be accounted the highest Aggravation of them.

Nor doth it follow that because thou hast long us'd thy self to this prophane and blasphemous Dialect,



it will therefore be impossible to *leave it off*; if thou wert sure that the next time thou swearest thou shouldst certainly have thy Tongue cut out, or thy Head struck off, I am confident thou wouldst *break off* the Custom: And is not the Wrath of God, and the Damnation of Hell infinitely more formidable than any Punishment Man can inflict? It is indeed difficult for a Man to change his Language, and requires some Care and Pains, but by the Grace of God duly and diligently improv'd, even this *Ethiopian* may be made to *change his Skin*, and this *Leopard his Spots*. And if now thou wilt not believe it, thou wilt be convinced of it when it is too late, That 'tis better a thousand times, to *break through* the Difficulties of a Reformation, than to *perish* eternally in the Sin.

Despair not of a Cure tho' the Disease be *Chronic*, but apply thy self with Resolution to the use of proper Means: Thou wouldst do so in case of Bodily Sickness; Be as wise for thy Soul then. If a diseased Appetite has long us'd it self to Trash and Dirt, doth it therefore follow that it must never be *heal'd*? If the Prodigal have been long upon the *Ramble*, must he never return to his Father's House? Better late than never.

The longer thou hast been accustomed to the Sin, the more need thou hast to *repent and reform*, and that quickly, lest thy Heart be hardened, and thy Conscience seared; and lest by a judicial Sentence of Divine Wrath, thou be at length *given up to thine own Heart's Lusts*, abandon'd by the Divine Grace, and *Repentance for ever hid from thine Eyes*. God's Spirit is, it may be, now striving with thee, but if thou resist him, he will *not always strive*.

Let me add this further, to shame you out of this Plea, That by persisting in this Sin, after you have  
been



been plainly told the Evil of it, you not only in Effect disclaim your Religion, but you likewise cast a Reproach upon your Reason. Nothing can be more absurd, than for a Man that pretends to any Degree of Wisdom, to confess himself so *weak*, and so *uncapable* of governing himself, as not to be able to forbear an ill Word, which he knows can do him no Service, but will certainly turn to his Prejudice. Remember this, and show your selves Men, Men of Reason, O ye Transgressors, and allow not your selves in that which your own sober Thoughts cannot but condemn.

(2) You urge, That it is the fashionable Language of the Place you live in, and the Company you converse with, and therefore you are not willing to leave it off. And if it were so, 'tis too great a Complement to be willing to go to Hell for Company; what will you get by herding your selves with those that shall be bundled for the Fire, and by doing as they do who are *treasuring up to themselves Wrath, against the Day of Wrath*. That's an expensive Fashion indeed which we cannot conform to without losing the Favour of God, and ruining our Souls for ever. If that which is fashionable were manifestly prejudicial to your Health, and threatening to your Life, you would rather be singular than sick, and would you not rather be singular than damn'd?

But the Murmur is not so: We will not grant that Swearing is the fashionable Language of our Country; 'tis only the common Language of the Fools in Israel, that are the shame and scandal of their Countrey. That which is in its own Nature ugly and indecent, and a Reproach to Mankind, tho' it may in some Places become common, yet cannot be made fashionable. There are those, (Thanks be to God) there are many who have a deep and sincere Reverence for the Blessed Name of God, who fear an Oath, and dare not prophane

prophane it : There are enough such to *save* you from the Imputation of *Singularity*, and to *keep* you in *Courtenance*, though you distinguish your selves from the vile Herd of common Swearers, and take not that impious Liberty of Speech which they do, who say, *Our Tongues are our own, who is Lord over us ?*

Is that to be call'd *fashionable*, which not only all the Godly Divines, in the Nation, of every Perswasion, both in their preaching and Converse, witness against, as directly contrary to the Law of God ; but which hath the Laws of the Land against it too, as an *Iniquity to be punish'd by the Judge*, and those Laws *enforc'd and strictly order'd to be put in Execution*, by Her Majesties most pious Proclamations, and these *publickly read*, both in our Churches, and in our Courts of Justice? Is that to be call'd *fashionable*, which is branded with so many Marks of publick Infamy, and which is so frequently and solemnly *proclaim'd to be a Discredit to the Kingdom, and a Reproach to our Holy Religion*? Shall it be in the Power of a few inconsiderate, inconsiderable Sots to keep up the Reputation of that which all wise, sober and good Men are agreed to run down? Shall that be called *fashionable* among Persons of Distinction, which is become most *customary* with those of the meanest Rank and Employment, and is the vulgar Language of the Rakes and such as are the Scum and Refuse of the People?

Be perswaded therefore to *break off* all intimate Society and Conversation with those who not only do such things, but have pleasure in them that do them, and with David, Psal. 119. 63. Be Companions with those that fear God and keep his Precepts, and then you will find it no hard Matter (by the Grace of God) to *break off* this

this wicked *Practice*, how much soever you have been accustomed to it ; and to forbear that Language which you know is so provoking to God, so displeasing to all good Men, and so destructive to the Peace and Welfare of your own Souls.

Set a *double Watch* before the *Door* of your Lips that you thus offend not. Abstain from all *Appearances* of this Sin ; avoid Temptations to it. If Gaming have ensnar'd you in it, either never play at all, or fix it as your Principle, that as there is no Gain, so there is no Game worth a prophane Oath. Keep up a Dread of the Sin, which certainly you will do if you truly repent of it. Tremble to hear others swear. Learn to pray, and then you will not be so apt to swear.

*Secondly*, *Cursing* is near a-kin to *prophane Swearing*, is the common Companion of it, and is another of the *Exorbitances* of an *Ungovern'd Tongue* : Cursing is *wishing evil* to our selves or others, absolutely or conditionally : A Sin exceeding sinful ; as great an Instance of the Corruption and Degeneracy of the humane Nature, and as sure an Evidence of the Reigning Power of Satan in the Soul, as any other whatsoever. Nothing is more naturally the Language of Hell than this ; nay, the Devil himself seems to have smother'd the Curse implied, when he said (Job. 1. 11. According to the Original) *if he curse thee not to thy Face* ; but that which he *list*ed, his Children *speak out*, wishing themselves *conspired* and *damn'd*, and what not, if such a thing be not so.

To shew you the Evil of it, I'll only recommend Two Things to your Thoughts :

1. Consider, *what a brutish piece of Madness it is to curse your selves.* If you do it *absolutely*, 'tis of the same Nature with Self-Murder; *wishing Harm to your selves is in Effect doing it*; and is a Breach of one of the first and great Laws of Nature, that of Self-Preservation. If you do it *conditionally*, 'tis of the same Nature with prophane Swearing, and incurs the same Guilt, with this additional Stain, that it is not only a mocking of God's Government, by a ludicrous Appeal to him, but a defying of his Judgment, a Challenge to the Almighty to *do his worst*.

O the daring Presumption of these Sinners, Sinners *against their own Heads, their own Souls!* The Devils beg'd of our Saviour, whose Power they were not ignorant of, *not to torment them before the time*: But these presumptuous Wretches, as if they thought their Judgment *linger'd*, and their Damnation *slumber'd* too long, pull Vengeance down upon their own Heads, and pray to God to *damn them*, and they need not fear but they shall be heard, for *so shall their Doom be, themselves have decided it.* They challenge the Devil to take them, and he is ready enough to seize his Prey. But shall I ask you, Are the Arrests of Devils, and the Flames of Hell such *delectable Things* that you should *court* them? Or are they only the Creatures of Fancy and Imagination, that you should *make so light* of them? Be not deceiv'd, God's Judgment is not a Jest, nor Hell a Sham; if you persist in this impious Contempt of Divine Revelation, you will *feel too late* what you would not *believe in time.*

If you have no Regard to God, nor any Concern for his Honour, yet have you no good will to your selves, nor any Love to your own Souls? Is it not enough that you are doing that every Day which deserves Damnation, but will you be so malicious to

*amand*



*demand Sentence against your selves? 'Tis but a moderate Curse with you to wish your selves hang'd, yet I have read of a Person of Quality in our own Nation, who coming to die upon the Gallows for Murther, publickly reflected upon it with bitter Regret, that he had accustomed himself to that wicked Imprecation, and now (saith he) I see, The Lord is righteous.*

But if this were a small Matter, you challenge God to *damn you*, and the Devil to *take you*: And what if God should say *Amen* to the next Curse, and immediately order Death to fetch you, and Hell to receive you? What if the Devils should be ready at the next Call, and take you presently? And *can thine Heart endure, or thy Hands be strong, when God shall deal with thee?* Art thou able to dwell with devouring Fire, and to inhabit everlasting Burnings? Knowest thou the Power of Gods Anger? Is thine eternal Salvation of such small Account with thee, that thou art willing to pawn it upon every trifling Occasion, and to imprecate the Loss of it, if such or such a thing be not so, which 'tis very possible may prove otherwise? How darest thou thus *provoke the Lord to Jealously*, whilst thou canst not pretend to be *stronger than he?* 1 Cor. 10. 22. *Wo unto you that thus desire the Day of the Lord*, you know not what you do, for the Day of the Lord, whatever it is to others, will be to you *Darkness, and not Light.* Amos. 5. 18.

2. Consider *what a Devilish piece of Malice it is to curse others.* 'Tis the highest Degree of Hatred, nor can any thing be more contrary than this to the Royal Law of Love and Charity. He that prays to God to *damn his Neighbour*, plainly intimates that he would *do it himself* if he could; and if he that *hates his Brother is a Murtherer*, surely he that thus curses him is the worst of Murtherers, he is *Abaddon*, a Destroyer. That Tongue is doubtless *set on Fire of Hell,*



*Hell*, which is for sending every Body *thither* at a Word, and which by *curſing Men* that are made after the Similitude of God, would set on Fire the whole Course of Nature, and is an Advocate for the Devil, that *raring Lion*, which seeks to devour pretious Souls. *Jam. 3. 6, 9.* Must the Righteous God be summon'd to execute thine angry Resentments, and call'd upon to *deſtroy* those whom he sent his own Son into the World to *ſave*, and to whom he is waiting to be Gracious? Because thou art out of Honour, must all about thee be sunk and ruin'd presently? As a *Midman* in his Frenzy laies about him with *Firebrands, Arrows, and Death*, so is he that curſeth his Neighbour; nay, perhaps his Wife, his Child, his Friend, and faith, Am not I in Passion? Or, *Am not I in sport?* Hast thou no other way of signifying thy Displeasure (if it be just) but by the Imprecation of Evil, the worst of Evils, which bear no proportion at all to the Offence given?

Put this Case close to thine own Heart: When thou wishest thy Child, or Servant, or Neighbour hang'd, confounded or damnd, or sent to the Devil, either thou meanest as thou sayest, or not. If thou *dost not wish* it, (as I charitably hope thou dost not) thou art guilty of a *manifest Falſhood*, and must own thy self a *Liar*: If thou *dost really wish* it, (and what Wickedness is it that will not enter into the Heart of a furious Man?) thou canst not but acknowledge thy self guilty of the most *barbarous and inhuman Malice* imaginable: So that every Curse proves thee a wilful Transgressor, either of the Law of Truth, or of the Law of Love, two as Sacred Laws, and which have as much of the Image of the Law Maker as any Mankind is bound by.

Consider further, The Causes thou art so *liberal* of will not hurt those against whom they are levell'd:

Thou

Thou dost but shew thy *Ill-Will* ; for as the *Bird* by *wandering*, and the *Swallow* by *flying*, so the *Curse* causeless shall not come. *Prov. 26. 2.* But they will certainly return upon thine own Head, to thy *Confusion*. As he loved *Curſing*, so let it come unto him—*In o his Bowels like Water*, and like *Oil* in a his *Bones*. *Pſal. 109. 17, 18.* They that are call'd to *inherit the Bleſſing* are commanded to *bleſs* and not to *curſe*. *Rom. 12. 14.* Believe it, *Sirs*, *Curſes* are *Edg-Tools*, which it is *ill jeſting* with.

In your furious and outrageous *Curſing* of the *Brute Creatures*, or that which is *inanimate* and *un-capable* of the *Harm* you wish it, what is wanting in *Malice* is made up in *Folly* and *Absurdity*, like that which the *Apoſtle* calls the *Madneſs* of *Balaam*, when he wish'd he had his *Sword* to *kill his own Aſs* with. By such silly nonsensical *Curſes* as you sometimes throw about in your *Paſſion*, you make it to appear, That with your *Religion* you put off *common Senſe*. You are *Men*, you are *rational Creatures*, speak with *Reason* then, and *Act* with *Reason*, and *Be ye not as the Horſe or the Mule*, that have no *Underſtanding* ; as *natural Brute Beaſts* made to be taken and *deſtroy'd*.

*Thirdly*, *Lying* is another of the *Exorbitances* of an *Ungovern'd Tongue*, and a very *pernicious* one.

It hath been ſaid of ſome, That tho' they do not *ſwear* yet they *will lie* ; 'Tis to be feared there are thoſe, of whom it is *too true* ; and let them bear *their own Burthen* ; but let not thoſe who would not for a *World* do either ſuffer for the ſame ; nor let *Swearers* think it will in the leaſt excuse *their Sin*, That there are *Liars* who are no *Swearers*. 'Tis certain, they are both *dammning Sins*, and either of them perſiſted in will undoubtedly be the *Ruin* of the *Sinner*.

Sinner. But if we may guess at one Sin by another, 'tis more probable, (as I hinted before) that they who make no Conscience of *Swearing*, will not stick at *Lying*; and we may charitably hope, unless we know the contrary, that they who dread a *prophane Oath*, will be as much afraid of telling a *wilful Lye*.

Let me therefore, in God's Name, seriously apply my self to those who (as the Prophet speaks) have *taught their Tongue to speak Lies*. Jer. 9. 5. For there is an Art in it, whether they be such Lies as seem to do Good, or such as are directly intended to do hurt, or such as are idle, and intended neither for Good nor Hurt. If they are Lies, they are Sins against God, and all *Liar*s shall have their Portion in the Bottomless Pit if they repent not; and the nice Distinctions with which they think to *justify*, or at least *excuse* themselves, will prove, in the Great Day, but a *Refuge of Lies*, which the *Hail will sweep away*. *Ila. 28. 17.*

1. A few Words, one would think, may serve for the *Conviction and Discovery* of these Sinners. Sure; you need not be told what *Lying* is, your own Consciences will tell you, if they be not seared, or brib'd, or forbidden to deal plainly with you.

In your *Bargains and Contracts* if you say that, either for selling the dearer, or buying the cheaper, which you know to be false, it is a Lye. Yet how common 's it, in the Multitude of those Words, for the Seller to call the Commodity *good and cheap*, and to averr that he gave *so much* for it, when he knows it is neither *so* nor *so*. And the Buyer in his dodging, will call it at *naught and dear* which he hath no reason to call *so*, and will say he can buy it *cheaper* elsewhere, when he doth not know that he can. *It is naught, it is naught, saith the Buyer; but when he is gone away,*  
then.

then he boasteth of a good Bargain, not considering that he was helped to it by a Lye. Prov. 20. 14.

In your *Excuses* which you make, either to Superiors or Equals, if you deny, extenuate, or conceal a Fault, by representing the Thing otherwise than it was, tho' you may gain your Point, and not be so much as suspected of Falshood, yet the Guilt is never the Less. When you are charg'd with a y Neglect, or Injury, you are ready to say you did not *know*, or did not *remember*, that which you are conscious to your selves you did *know*, and did *remember*; you plead that you *thought*, or *intended* so and so, when really you did not *think* or *intend* any such thing: These are the common Refuges of those that are culpable, because the Profession of a Man's Thoughts and Purposes is not easily disprov'd. But tho' Men cannot convict us of Falshood in these Professions, *he that searcheth the Heart* can. Men may be sham'd with a frivolous Excuse, but *God is not mocked*.

In your *Commendations* of your selves or others, if you give a better Character than you know there is Cause or Ground for; if you *boast of a false Gift*, and represent your Abilities Possession, and Performances, to greater Advantage than they deserve, and than the Truth will bear, tho' these may pass for innocent Hyperboles with those that take the same Liberty themselves, yet your own Consciences will tell you, if they be Faithful, that hereby they add the Sin of *Lying* to the Sin of *Pride*, than which there are not two Sins that *God hates* more.

In your *Censures*, if you put *false Constructions* upon the Words and Actions of your Neighbours, making a great Crime of that which was nothing, or next nothing, unjustly aggravating Faults, and making them worse than really they are, or representing that as



as certain, which is but suspected and doubtful, much more, if it should prove that you lay to Mens Charge *things that they know not*, hereby you involve your selves in a double Guilt, Falshood, and Uncharitableness.

In your *Promises*, if you engage that you will do so or so, pay such a Debt, or finish such a Piece of Work within such a time, or do such a Kindness for your Friend, when either you do not at all *intend* it, or foresee you *cannot perform* it, or afterwards take no care either to *fulfill* the Promise when it is in the Power of your Hand, or if disabled to do that, in due time to *recall* it, hereby there is Guilt contracted. Either the Promise should not have been made, or it should have been kept.

In your *Common Reports*, and the Stories you tell for Discourse sake and the keeping up of Conversation, if you report that as *true and certain* which you know to be otherwise, and do not make Conscience of representing every thing as near as possible to the Truth, and to your own sober Thoughts, you become Transgressors.

2. Sure there needs not many Words to perswade you to repent of this Sin, and carefully to watch against it for the future, and all Appearances of it. Consider how contrary it is to God, it is a Breach of his Law, it is a defacing of his Image, for he is the God of Truth. And it exposeth us to his Wrath, for *Lying Lips are an Abomination to the Lord*. Consider how conformable it is to the Devil, and how much it makes you to resemble him, for *he is a Liar and the Father of it*. It is an Injury to your Brother, not only to the particular Person who perhaps is wrong'd by it, but to Humane Society in general. And it will be the Ruin of your own pretious Souls,

if



if you persist in it. They that thus *do the Works* of the Devil, shall have their Portion *with the Devil and his Angels*. A Lye is soon told, and perhaps as soon forgotten, and a light Matter made of it; but the Punishment of it will be everlasting in the *Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone*, out of which there is no Redemption.

Fourthly, The common careless using of the Blessed Name of God, without due Application, is another Instance of the Ill-Government of the Tongue, which needs a Check.

Many that never curse or swear, yet allow themselves in the taking of God's Name in vain, and either know not, or consider not the Evil of it, and the Dishonour done (tho' not intended) to God by it. When you use these Forms of Speech, which are properly expressive of a Pious Ejaculation, in a light and careless manner, and to any other purpose than their Genuine and Original Signification, which appears by your way of speaking, not to be intended, but something else, you prophane that which is Sacred, and alienate to a common use that which appears to have been dedicated to God, and hath Holiness to the Lord written on it. To say, *O Lord*, when you mean no more but *I am hurt*; and *God knows*, when you mean no more but *I do not know*; and *God bless me*, when you mean no more but *I am surpriz'd*; and *God help you*, when you mean no more but *I pray you*, or any the like, is certainly taking the Name of the Lord your God in vain, and to no Purpose, that is, to no good Purpose.

Now will you that accustom your selves to this Language consider a little,

1. That it is a great *Affront to the God of Heaven*. You hereby make his Blessed Name a *By-Word*, and put that slight upon it which you would not bear to be put upon your own Names. That's a great *Example* which the *Bp. of Sarum* tells us was observed of the Honourable *Mr. Boyl*, that he never *mention'd* the Name of God but with a *discernable Stop and Pause* in his Discourse, in token of a Reverence for that Glorious and fearful Name, and to leave room for a *devout Thought*. Great and Serious Things ought to be spoken of with great Seriousness, and they are abus'd if they are prostituted to a common Use.

2. That it is certainly a *Breach of the Law of the third Commandment*, which is very express, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*, and it is back'd with a threatening that *the Lord will not hold them guiltless* that do so, in which certainly more is implied than is express'd; 'tis suppos'd that many such will *hold themselves guiltless*, and think they do no harm, and others will *hold them guiltless*, but God will severely reckon with them, for he is a *jealous God*.

3. That it is a great *Prophanation of the Holy Ordinance of Prayer*. the better any thing is, the worse it is when it is corrupted; There's nothing better than the devout and serious Mention of the Name of our God as there is Occasion, nothing better than pious Addresses to God when the Heart goes along with them; But if this degenerate into a Mockery, if the dead Carcase hereof only is retain'd, and there is no Spirit of Life in it, if there be not so much as an outward Solemnity and Decorum observ'd, but the Manner

of using those good Words plainly shews and avows it, that there is nothing Pious and Devout intended by them, it is in effect a Banter upon Prayer, turns it into Burlesque and Ridicule, and is exceeding offensive to God and good Men.

It will be hard to use these Words seriously, when they should be us'd so, which you have so often us'd *vainly* when you should not; and what Comfort can you expect in Prayer, when you are *serious*, and need the Comfort of it, if at other times you use the Words of Prayer thus lightly and prophanely?

And now shall I prevail with you never to mention the Name of God but with Seriousness, and in a *holy and reverend* Manner? Say not you have so us'd your selves to these Expressions that you cannot leave them: Resolution, by the Grace of God, will change the Dialect. Will those ever lose their Lives for Christ that will not leave a sinful inconsiderate Word for him? One would think this a small piece of *Self-Denial*. Let the Fear of God rule in your Hearts, and always maintain a Holy Awe and Reverence of him, and then out of the *Abundance of that the Mouth will speak* of him with Reverence, and will not dare to speak otherwise. The Description which the Scripture gives of Hypocrites, Isa. 48. 1. is that *they make mention of the God of Israel, but not in Truth*; but the Description of true Saints is, That *they think on God's Name*. Mal. 3, 16. Act with Reason, and either think of what you say, or do not say what you do not think of.

Fifthly, *Scorning at Religion and Godliness, and jesting with Sacred Things* is another of the Exorbitances of an ungovern'd Tongue.

By the Commonness of this Sin, in this loose and degenerate Age of ours, it appears that we live in the Dregs of Time; for the Scripture speaketh expressly that *in the last Days*, those corrupt and perillous Times, there should arise *Scoffers, walking after their own Lusts*. 2. Pet. 3. 3. *Prophane People*, when they set up for Wits, think they cannot better shew their Wit than in endeavouring to justify their Prophaneness.

To shew you the Evil of it, consider

1. *The Malignant Principles from whence it flows*. When there is in the Heart an Habitual Contempt of Divine Things, and an Antipathy to them, and a reigning Enmity to the Power of Godliness, thus it vents it self, and what is wanting in Reason on its side, is made up in Jest and Banter. When Men are resolv'd not to make themselves *serious* with the Things of God, they will make themselves *merry* with them; and think they gain their Point if they can but turn them off with a Jest; as if that which they are pleas'd to make the Subject of their Laughter, were therefore to be look'd upon as a just Object of Contempt. They endeavour to represent the Word of God as a Sham, Heaven as a Fool's Paradise, and Hell as meerly the Creature of a craz'd Imagination, by *playing* upon them, and turning them into Burlesque; Thus *sporting themselves with their own Deceivings*; but it will prove like the *Philistines making Sport with Sampson*, what they sport with will prove too strong for them, and their prophane Mirth will be a Prologue to their Ruin. *Be ye not Mockers lest your Bands be made strong*. Isa. 28. 22.

2. The

2. The *Mischievous Consequences that flow from it* You that thus make a Jest of Holy Things, tho' you make a light Matter of it, ought to consider what you do, and what will be in the end hereof. Think what an Affront you hereby put upon the Blessed God, imputing Folly to Infinite Wisdom, and villifying him who is the Fountain of Honour. Think what an Injury you hereby do to Religion, and how much you serve the Interests of the Devil and his Kingdom, as those that are retain'd of Council in his Cause. Seemeth it a light thing to you, that you are wicked your selves, but will you do what you can to make others wicked too, that you may, besides *your own* Torments hereafter, share in the Torments of *all the Souls* you help to ruin? Think how you will answer it at the great Day, and what bitter Reflections you will then make upon your daring Impieties of this kind, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven to execute Judgment upon all for all *their hard Speeches spoken against him*. It is better to reflect, and repent and reform now, while there is a possibility of your Reconciliation to the God you have provok'd, than to be forc'd to remember it in Hell, to your utter Confusion, in a State of endless and hopeless Separation from God.

*Sixthly, Scurrilous and reproachful Language* given to those you have Dealings with, or Power over, is another Exorbitance of an ungovern'd Tongue.

This is that which our Saviour has told us is a Breach of the Sixth Commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*; 'tis Tongue Murder, a Sin exceeding sinful, and certainly damping to the Sinner if it be not repented of and forsaken, so he hath fore-



warn'd us who is to be our Judge. We are sure that his Judgment will be according to the Truth of his Word; and he hath said it, Mat. 5. 22. *Whoſoever ſhall, in Wrath and Paſſion, ſay to his Brother Raca, Thou baſe empty Fellow, Rogue and Rascal,* (for *Raca* was us'd then as thoſe opprobrious Names are now) he that doth ſo *ſhall be in danger of the Council, i. e. ſhall be expoſ'd to the Wrath and Curſe of the Eternal God,* and not only ſo, but if he had his Deſert ſhould be call'd to an Account for it by the civil Magiſtrate, for it is an Iniquity to be puniſh'd by the Judge: And *whoſoever ſhall in like manner ſay, Thou Fool, Thou Reprobate, thou wicked Wretch, Thou damn'd confounded Fellow, ſhall himſelf be in danger of that Hell-Fire,* to which he ſo raſhly condemns his Brother.

Calling foul Names, and giving foul Language, eſpecially to Servants and Inferiors, is grown ſo very common among us, that with thoſe who live at large, and not only *ſet their Mouth againſt the Heavens,* but let their *Tongue walk at liberty through the Earth,* (Pſal. 73. 9.) it is look'd upon as part of the Accompliſhment of a Gentleman to be able to do it *bluſtringly,* and with Fluency and Variety; And yet perhaps there are thoſe of the meanest Rank that may *vy with them,* and can do it with *as good a Grace.*

But how common ſoever it is, and how much ſoever countenanced by the practice of ſome that make a Figure, you ſee it is a Sin expreſſly againſt the Law of Chriſt, and is certainly included, and perhaps principally intended in that *Bitternels and Wrath,* that *Clamour and evil ſp-aking* which ought to be put far from us, leſt we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Eph. 4. 30, 31.

You.

You that allow your selves this Liberty of abusing all about you, and of dealing Nick-Names, and Names of Reproach at your pleasure, among those you converse with, or have power over, shall I propound two or three Things to your serious Thoughts?

1. Consider *who they are that you thus abuse and trample upon, thus taunt and better over.* Are they not your Fellow-Creatures, of the same Rank of Beings with your selves? Were not you made of the same Clay that they were, and as mean as they in your Original? Were not they made by the same Great and Mighty Hand that you were, and as Honourable as you in their Relation to the Father of Spirits? This Consideration sway'd with Holy *Job* to carry it with all possible Tenderness and Respect, even to his *own* Servant, when he contended with him, *Job. 31. 15. Did not he that made me in the Womb make him?* And the same Argument is urg'd in a Case not much unlike, *Mal. 2. 10. Have we not all one Father? Why then do we deal treacherously every Man against his Brother?*

Perhaps those whom you so readily, and with so great an Assurance, call *Fools* and *Knaves*, have as much Ingenuity and Integrity as your selves; nay it may be they are every way *wiser* and *better*. However as the Apostle argues, *1 Jam. 3. 9.* they are *made after the Similitude of God*, they are of that Species of Creatures which was at first so made; and therefore God is reflected on by the ignominious Treatment you give them. If they have natural Defects and Infirmities of Body or Mind which they cannot help, those ought not to be turn'd to their Reproach, for they

they are as God made them, and he might have made you so. If their Condition in the World be mean and despicable, and the Distance that Providence hath put between you and them seems great, it doth not therefore follow that you may give them what Language, and what Usage you please. *Though God be high yet hath he respect unto the lowly*, much more should you. *He that mocketh the Poor reproacheth his Maker*. Prov. 17. 5. not only him that made him, but him that made him poor.

The Crime is much aggravated if those you thus abuse are *Pious* and *Good*, such as by Grace are *renew'd after the Image of God*, and made *partakers of his Holiness*, which possibly they may be, and yet not be number'd among either the *witty* or the *wealthy* Part of Mankind. Whatever you may think of your selves, in comparison with those you thus insult over, a wiser than you, even Infinite Wisdom it self hath said it once, yea twice, Prov. 14. 1, and Chap. 28. 6. *Better is the Poor that walketh in his Integrity than he that is perverse in his Lips, though he be rich*. Will you then despise those whom God hath honoured, and lay those under your Feet whom God has laid in his Bosom? Dare you put those among the Dogs of your Flock whom Christ hath put among the Lambs of his Flock?

2. Consider, That *there is no good done by this sort of Language, but a great deal of hurt*. What desirable End can you propose to your selves in it? You would be *obey'd*, you would be *fear'd*, and will not the Meekness of Wisdom command Respect a thousand times better than the Outrages of Folly? It is certain there is nothing you say, which is *introduc'd* and *accounted* with this rude and

and boisterous Language, but the same thing might be better said, and to much better purpose, if it were not so prefaced. Solomon's Observation holds true, That the Words of wise Men are heard in quiet, more than the Cry of him that rules among Fools. Eccl. 9. 17.

May you do a great deal of hurt by using your selves to such Language.

(1.) You disturb and provoke others by it. These grievous-Words stir up Anger, and who knows how long that Anger may last, what it may produce, and where it may end? Nor how great a Matter a little Fire of this kind may kindle? Put your Souls into their Soul's stead whom you thus abuse, and consider if you were in Poverty and Meannels and in an inferiour Relation how you would like it, and how you could bear it to be rated and trampled on, and call'd by so many ill Names, and do not that to others which you would not should be done to you.

(2.) You disgrace and disparage your selves by it. While you think hereby to keep up your Authority, and make your selves great and formidable, you really prostitute your Authority, and render your selves mean and contemptible, and give just occasion to those you abuse to think as ill of you as you say of them, tho' they dare not speak it out. You declare plainly [1.] That you are Slaves to your own Passions, which is as toilsom and dishonourable a Slavery as a Man can be in: You say that in the Heat of Passion which you your selves could scarce turn your Tongues to if you were sober and calm, and thereby proclaim Passion King over you, that great Leviathan who is King over all the Children of Pride. Job. 41. 34. [2.] That you are not Masters of your own Reason

*Reason*; your *Anger* is a *Fit of Madness*, and for the time your *Wisdom* is departed from you, when in *Wrath* you call others *Fools*, the *Reproach* returns upon your own *Heads*. Some of this foul ill-favour'd *Language* you use to give, carries along with it its own *Conviction* of *Aburdity*. You'll call him a *Dog* whom you see to be a *Man*, and the *Son of a Whore* whom you really take to be *legitimate*; and what *Sense* is there in this? Doth this become one that pretends to *Reason*? Blush at it for *shame*, and resolve never again to make such a *Fool* of thy self.

3. Consider *How obnoxious you your selves are to the Righteous Judgment of God*. If you seriously retire into your own *Hearts*, and impartially reflect upon your own *Ways*, you will find that you have much more *Reason* to reproach your selves for your *Provocations* against *God*, than to fall foul upon your *Servants* or others for their *Defects* in their *Duty* to you. We ought to forbear *Threaning*, and to moderate it, (*Eph. 6. 9.*) for what would become of us if *God* should enter into *Judgment* with us? When we taunt others for their *Dulness* and *Folly*, their *Carelessness* and *Forgetfulness*, we ought to remember the same things against our selves, and then we will only give just and gentle *Reproofs*, and not senseless and furious *Reproaches*. Holy *Job* restrain'd himself from the *Heats* of *Passion* with this Consideration, *Chap. 31. 14. What then shall I do when God riseth up? And when he visiteth what shall I answer him?* Think not that the strength of your *Passion* will be a sufficient *Excuse* for the *Indecencies* of your *Language*. The *Sin* of the *Heart* will never justify the *Sin* of the *Tongue*; but on the contrary the *Sin* of the *Tongue* will aggra-  
vate



vare the Sin of the Heart. Resolve therefore for the future, whenever your Heart is hot within you, that you will keep your Mouth as with a Bridle.

Seventhly, Lewd, Obscene, and Filthy Talk, is another of the vile Exorbitances of an unsanctified, ungovern'd Tongue.

It is a thing to be greatly lamented that this impudent Sin which bids open defiance to Virtue and Honour, and wages War with them, like a spreading Leprosy, stains the Beauty of our Land, turns a Canaan into a Sodom, and is become an epidemical Disease. For the relief of those that are infected with it, and are not incurably unclean, I would in a few Words shew you the Evil of it.

1. Consider what an Offence it is to the Pure and Holy God, who takes notice of, and is much displeased with the Uncleanness of your Lips, as well as that of your Hearts and Lives. It is a Violation even of the Law of Nature, which prescribes Modesty, and teaches us to blush at every thing that is Immodest. The Law of Moses provided for the keeping up of this Hedge of Chastity, and in many Instances punish'd that which broke through this Hedge. It was one of the Laws of Romulus, (some of the most ancient Human Laws that are extant) *Nequis obscena verba facit*, That none should dare to speak an obscene Word. But (which to us is above all) the Law of Christ is very express against all Filibines and foolish talking and jsting, and appoints that Fornication and all Uncleanness should not be once named among Christians without the greatest Abhorrence. Eph. 5. 3, 4. And is the Law of Christ nothing with you? Can you go so directly contrary to it and yet hope to prosper? God hath told you plainly there, v. 5. That such unclean Persons have no Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and v. 6. That because  
of

of these things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience. And you cannot suppose that the fixed Laws of Heaven should be dispens'd with to gratifie your base Lusts. The Law of Christ shall either rule you, or judge you.

2. Consider *what an Evidence it is against your selves, that you are possess'd by the unclean Spirit, and are under his Power.* Out of the abundance of the Filthiness that is in the Heart the Tongue speaks thus filthily, and from that Root of Bitterness arises this Gall and Wormwood. The abominable Lewdness that is in the Heart, and is harbour'd and indulg'd there, boils up in this noisom Scum. Stinking Breath is a sign of putrid Lungs. While you please your selves and your Companions with this dirty Language, you do but *foam out your own shame, and sport your selves with your own Deceivings.* You think you shew your Wit by it, but indeed you shew your Wickedness, and declare your Sin as Sodom, as those that are not ashamed, and cannot blush. Chastity and Modesty have been Virtues, and are so, and will be so, how much soever they are despised and disdain'd by the first-rate Sinners of the Age; and that which is a Virtue is a Praise, is an Honour, which if you want, yet you need not proclaim that you do so, nor be proud of your Shame.

Unclean Thoughts may, through the Infirmary of the Flesh, and for want of Watchfulness, come into the Minds of those who disallow them, lament them, and strive against them, knowing that even these Thoughts of Fcolishness are Sin: But unclean Discourse is much worse, and more exceeding sinful, for thereby you signifie your Approbation and Allowance of those unclean Thoughts; you put an Imprimatur to them, and consent to the Publication of them for the common Service of the Devil's Kingdom.

*Here turn back to page 35. of* 3. Consider the first Discourse.

3. Consider *what a great deal of Hurt it is likely to do to others.* Though this Sin doth not so immediately reflect upon the Blessed Name of God as Swearing doth, and therefore hath not so much Malignity in its Nature, yet it doth more towards the corrupting of the Minds of others, and the propagating of Vice and Wickedness than perhaps any other Tongue-Sin whatsoever, and so is more mischievous in its Consequences. Such Tinder is the corrupt Heart of Man to these Sparks, that one unclean Word to an *unguarded* Soul may be the unhappy occasion of a thousand unclean Thoughts, which may produce a *World of Iniquity.* If this Root of Bitterness thus spring up and sprout forth, thereby *many are defiled,* (Heb. 12. 15.) more than perhaps you are aware of: And your Account in the Great Day will *rise high* if you must be answerable for all that Uncleaness which hath been *spawn'd* in the Minds of others by your lewd Talk.

Filthy Stories, and Songs, and Jest, are the pestilential Breath of Hell, which propagates the Infection of Sin, Old Satan's *Wiles,* by which he betrays unwary Souls into their own Ruin. And those *unclean Lips* which help to lay those Snares, are Factors for the *unclean Spirit,* and by debauching the Minds of others with their vile Discourses, perhaps serve the Devil's Kingdom and the Interests of it as *effectually* as those that debauch the Bodies of others with their vile Adulterys. *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners.*

If those that hear your lewd Talk be not *so bad* as to be infected by it, certainly they are *so good* as to be offended at it. He is unfit for civil Company, and breaks the Law of good Manners, who takes a Pleasure in saying that which a wise and good Man must *frown upon,* and hear with Shame, or with an angry Countenance.

tenance. What Mr. Cowly saith of *lewd* Poems, is with a little Alteration, applicable to *lewd* Discourse.

——— 'Tis just,  
The Speaker blush there where the Hearer must.

That Discourse is but bad Entertainment which occasions either Guilt or Grief to all that hear it.

Therefore, Let all that have accustom'd themselves to this Language be perswaded to *leave it off*, and from henceforward to set such a careful *Watch before the Door of their Lips*, that they never more offend thus with their *Tongue*; and if at any time they think this evil, let them lay their *Hand upon their Mouth*, (Prov. 30. 32.) that it go no further. That Mirth is *dear bought* which is purchased at the *Expence* of the Favour of God, the Honour of Virtue, and the Purity and Peace of our own Consciences. Better lose your *Jest* than lose all these *Jewels*. Dread the Consequences of it, not to others only, but to your *selves*. Those who allow themselves in the Transgression of the Laws of Modesty, it is to be feared, will not long be govern'd by the Laws of Chastity. The way of Sin is down *Hill*.

And let me bespeak all that are well-Wishers to Religion and Virtue, not only to be very cautious themselves never to say any thing that looks like Lewdness, or looks towards it, but in all Companies to contrive how they may put this Vice to the *Blush*, expose it to Contempt, and dash it out of Countenance. They that would approve themselves strictly modest, must never seem pleas'd at the hearing of that which is otherwise, nor laugh at an immodest Jest or Story, lest they should have Fellowship with these unfruitful Works of Darkness, which ought to be frown'd upon, and reprov'd rather. Let it be seen that you can be merry



merry and wise, merry and modest. Reckon it a Burthen to dwell among a People of unclean Lips (Isa. 6. 5.) and pray to God that (according to his Promise, Zeph. 3. 9.) he would turn our People to a pure Language, that we may be fit to call upon the Name of the Lord.

Having thus Instanced in some of the Vices of an ungovern'd Tongue, (especially those that are most common with such as are openly prophane) and given some particular Hints of Argument against them, I shall now close with some general Directions for the reducing of the exorbitant Power of an unruly Tongue.

First, See that the Heart be truly and thoroughly sanctified by the Grace of God. If you would have the Disease cur'd, you must lay the Axe to the Root, and meet it in its Causes. The peccant Humour within must be purg'd out, else these Eruptions, tho' they may be check'd for a time by external Restraints, yet will never be heal'd. The right Method prescrib'd by the Great Physician, is first to keep the Heart with all Diligence, and then by that means to put away the froward Lips. See Prov. 4. 23, 24. The way to heal these poisonous Waters is, like Elisha, 2 Kings 2. 21. to cast Salt into the Spring, make the Tree good, and then the Fruit will be good. 'Tis out of an evil Treasure in the Heart that evil things are brought, Men speak slightly of God, and spitefully of their Brethren, because they think so; let but the Thoughts be rectified, and the Language will be soon reform'd.

If the Law of Holy Love to God and your Neighbour were written in your Hearts, and you were as you should be, acted and govern'd by these as a living commanding Principle, you would not dare to offend either the one or the other with your Tongue; That good Treasure laid up in the Heart would bring forth



*good things to the use of edifying, which would manifest Grace in him that speaks, and minister Grace unto the Heavens. The Fear of God always before your Eyes will be an effectual Restraint upon you from saying that by which either his Name is dishonour'd, or his Law violated. The Grace of God is a Cole from the Altar, which if it touch the Tongue, the Iniquity of it will be purged away. Isa. 6. 7.*

Let the Throne of Christ be set up in your Hearts, and his Love shed abroad there, and then you will not call it a *needless Preciseness* to be thus careful of your Words, but a *necessary Strictness*, because by our Words we must be *justified, or condemned*. Then you will not call it a Task and a Slavery to be thus ty'd up, and to speak by Rule, but an *Honour and a Pleasure*: For assuredly this Blessed Change wrought in the Soul by the renewing Grace of God, will open such *surprising Springs* of present Joy and Comfort, as will abundantly *balance* all the *Uneasiness* which the corrupt Nature will complain of in these Restraints.

*Secondly, Solemnly resolve against these and all other Tongue-Sins. Let Holy David's Vow be yours, and bind your Souls with it this Day, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my Tongue, and remember as he doth there, that you have said it, that you may not break your Promise. Psal. 39. 1, 2.*

While the Result of your Convictions is no more but this, That you hope you shall govern your Tongues better for the future, and that *for ought you know*, you will not swear so much as you have done, and in the mind you are in, you will not speak so many idle filthy Words as you have spoken, if this be all, you leave room for Satan to thrust in with his Temptations; Faint Purposes are soon shaken, and prove to no purpose: But when you are come to a point, and without Equivocation,

cation, or Mental Reservation, will solemnly promise that by the Grace of God you will never swear nor curse any more, you will never take God's Name in vain any more; you will never speak a lewd or scurrilous Word any more; this fortifies the stronghold against the Tempter, who (like Naomi, Ruth 1. 18.) when he sees you are *stedfastly resolv'd*, will leave off speaking to you.

Renew this Resolution every Day, especially if you have a Prospect of any Occasion which will be a more than ordinary Temptation to you. Thus *set a Guard* upon the Door of your Lips, and at some times *doubt* your Guard, where you find your selves weakest and most expos'd. Try the strength of your Resolutions, and do not for shame suffer your selves to be baffled in them. Only remember to *make and renew* these Resolutions in a dependance upon the Grace of Jesus Christ, which alone is *sufficient for you*. Peter resolv'd against a Tongue-Sin in his own strength, but it fail'd him, and he was made ashamed of his Confidence; Confide therefore in Divine Strength only.

*Thirdly, Keep out of the way of bad Company*. Speech is learn'd by Imitation, and so is corrupt Speech. We are apt in Discourse to conform to those with whom we do associate; and therefore if we would *keep those Commandments of our God* which relate to the Government of the Tongue, we must say to evil Doers, *Depart from us*. Psal. 119. 115. Converse not familiarly and of choice with those that accustom themselves to any evil Communication, *lest you learn their way*, lest you learn their Words, and get such a Snare to your Souls as you will not easily disentangle your selves from.

That Dread and Terror, and Abhorrence of Swearing and Cursing, and all prophane Discourse, which all that are virtuously and piously Educated, are con-

scious to themselves of at first, is apt to wear off by frequent and free Converse with those that use *such Language*. 'Tis excus'd as a slip of the Tongue which doth no body any harm; Nay, 'tis justified as a fashionable Ornament of Speech; and so by degrees the debauched Conscience comes to be reconcil'd to it, and at last the Tongue is taught not only to lisp the same cursed Language, but with a great deal of Art and Assurance, to speak it plain. *Joseph* himself in the Court of *Egypt*, had unawares got the Courtier's Oath, *By the Life of Pharaoh*.

If you love your Souls, therefore be very careful what Company you keep; chuse to converse familiarly with those of whom you may learn that which is edifying, and by whose Discourse and Example you may be made wiser and better: And avoid the Society of those by whom, without a greater Degree of Wisdom and Watchfulness than you can pretend to, you will certainly get hurt to your selves. Ill Words are sooner learn'd than unlearn'd. Therefore, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not; Prov. 1. 10. Though they do not say, as they there, v. 11. *Come and let us lay wait for Blood*. Come and let us swear and curse, and bid defiance to all that's Sacred, but palliate the Temptation, and make it look very harmless, *Come and let us take a Glass and be merry over it*. If they be such as are commonly prophane and lewd in their Discourse, fear a Snare in their Company, and keep at a distance from it. *Walk not in their Counsel, stand not in their way, sit not in thir Seat*. Psal. 1. 1. Make no Friendship with those that make no Conscience of their Words, and that shew they have no Veneration for the Blessed Name of God. Remember *Solomon's* Advice (Prov. 14. 7.) and be rul'd by it. *Go from the Presence of a foolish Man, when thou perceivest not in him the Lips of Knowledge*.

*Fourthly, Think twice before you speak once.* We often speak amiss, because we speak in haste; when that comes out which comes uppermost, what can it be but Scum and Froth, and Dross? Moses spake unadvisedly with his Lips, not consulting with himself before he spake, and then he said that which shut him out of Canaan. *Psal. 106. 23.* What we speak in haste, we oft find Cause afterwards to repent of at leisure. David more than once reflects with regret upon what he said in his haste, and we have all a great deal of Reason to do so. Our second Thoughts, if we would take time for them, would correct the Errors of the first; and we should not offend with our Tongue so often as we do, if we would but consider what we say, before we say it. *The Heart of the Righteous studyeth to answer that which is fit and seasonable, while the Mouth of Fools poureth out Foolishness.*

Be few of your Words and then you will not have so many ill Words to answer for as most have; For, in the multitude of Words there wanteth not Sin, and divers Vanities. You have oft been the worse for speaking, but seldom the worse for keeping Silence. Many a thing which you have said, you would have smother'd and suppress'd if you had but allowed your selves the Liberty of a serious and impartial Thought upon it. *Little said, soon amended.*

You durst not prophane God's Blessed Name with your unhallored Breath, if you would but think seriously what a God he is whom you thus blaspheme and provoke. You durst not curse your selves or others if you would but consider the weight of the Curse, and what a fearful thing it is to fall under it. You durst not scoff at Religion if you did but consider how Sacred and Honourable it is. Reason in other Cases is of use to rectifie the Mistakes of Imagination, use it here then.

*Fifthly,*



*Fifthly, Have care to the Account that is now kept, and must shortly be given, of all your idle wicked Words. You believe the Holy Scriptures, you do well. Now they tell you what will be in the End hereof. The Word of God will judge you shortly, therefore let it rule you now.*

Notice is now taken of all you say, whether you are aware of it or no. *There is not a Word in your Tongue, tho' spoken in haste, and not regarded by you, but God knows it altogether, and a Book of Remembrance is written. God told the Prophet Ezekiel what the People said of him by the Walls, and in the Doors of their Houses, Ezek. 33. 30. and he can make a Bird of the Air to carry the Voice of that which is said in the Heart, or in the Bed-Chamber. Eccl. 10. 20. You think you may curse and swear securely when you are out of the reach of those that would reprove you, or inform against you; and because God for the present keeps Silence, you think he is altogether such an one as your selves, as careless of his Government as you are of your Duty; but he will reprove you, and set them in order before you, and make it to appear that he kept an exact Account of all you said: Now consider this, ye that forget God (Psal. 50. 21.) stand in awe of this, and sin not with your Tongues. Take heed, God hears, were you in the Presence of some grave Men that you had a Reverence for, you would have a care what you say, and shall not the Presence of the Great God strike an awe upon you?*

But this is not all, the Day is coming when there will be a Review; when the Books that are written will be opened, and all your prophane Oaths and Curses and Corrupt Communications will be found upon Record there, and produced as Evidence against you. He that is to be the Judge in that Day, hath himself expressly told us, Mat. 12. 36. that every idle word that Men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of



of Judgment; and if for every idle Word, much more for every prophane and wicked Word. What an Account will they have to make, all whose *Breath was corrupt, till their Days were extinct*, who always allowed themselves a boundless Liberty of Speech from under the Dominion of Religion and right Reason, and never took care by Repentance and Prayer, and Reformation to empty the Measure of Guilt they had fill'd, nor to ballance the Account in the Blood of Christ which cleanseth from all Sin.

Think not that any Profession of Religion which you make will excuse you, or stand you in any stead in that Day while you thus contradict it, and give the Lye to it, by the Exurgences of your Tongues. The Word of God hath laid it down as a certain Rule, Jam. i. 26. *If any Man among you seem to be Religious and bridleth not his Tongue, that Man's Religion is vain*; and if your Religion be vain, it will never bring you to Heaven, and then I need not tell you whither your Irreligion will bring you.

It will be the eternal Doom of those that persisted in their Tongue-Sins, and would not be reformed, that *their own Tongues shall fall upon themselves*, Psal. 64. 8. and if they do, they will sink them to the lowest Hell, in which the remembrance of all the Looses of an *ungovern'd Tongue* will be very bitter, and bring Oil to the Flames. We read of it as the Misery of condemned Sinners that they are tormented in a Flame, where they have not a drop of Water to cool their Tongues. Words are soon spoken, and when they are spoken are soon gone, and yet Words spoken against an Earthly Prince, tho' repented of have cost many a Man his Life, and shall it then be difficult to us to believe that Words spoken against the King of Kings, and never repented of, shall exclude Men from his Kingdom, and lay them for ever under his Wrath? 'Tis commonly said, *Words are but Wind* bur,

but wicked words will prove such a mischievous Wind as will not only keep the Soul out of the Blessed Haven of Rest and Happiness, but sink it into the Gulf of Everlasting Destruction.

*Sixthly, Reflect upon it with Sorrow and Shame, and great Regret, if at any time you have, ere you were aware, spoken any wicked Word. Keep Conscience tender in this Matter, and if through the surprize of Temptation you any way offend with your Tongue, let your Heart presently smite you for it, humble your selves greatly before God for it, pass it not over with a slighty careless God forgive me, but be in Pain and Bitterness at the remembrance of it; abhor your selves, as Holy Job, when he was reflecting upon his Tongue-Sins, and repent in dust and ashes. If you can easily forgive your selves what is past, 'tis to be fear'd you will easily be brought to do the like again.*

*Lastly, Pray earnestly to God for his Grace, to keep you from sinning with your Tongue. Though the Tongue be an unruly Evil, yet he can tame it who sets Bounds to the proud Waves of the Sea, and once stop'd the Lions Mouths. To him therefore, you must apply your selves by Faithful and Fervent Prayer, and put your selves under the Conduct and Custody of his Grace, which will be sufficient for you if you seek it, and improve it, and go forth in the strength of it. Let David's Prayer be your's daily, Psal. 141. 2. Set a watch O Lord before my Mouth, keep the Door of my Lips, for without his Assistance we can do nothing. Pray against Provocations to these Sins, and pray for Wisdom wherewith to govern your selves in the midst of Provocations; watch and pray that either you may not be led into Temptation, or however not overcome by it. If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God.*

And now, what shall be the Success of this Endeavour? Shall all our Reasonings with you, in love to your Souls, be *sighted and laugh'd at* like the foolish Banter of your vain Companions? Can we not prevail for a Reformation of your Language when we plead the Honour of God, the Law of Christ, the Good of your Brethren, and the Welfare of your own Sou's, and you have nothing to plead to the contrary but a foolish wicked Custom? *I hope better things, and things that accompany Salvation.* Your Tongue is *your Glory*, do not *turn this Glory into shame*, but use it as your Glory, by honouring God and edifying one another with it; so shall the Tongue which is thus accustom'd to the *Language of Canaan*, sing Hallelujahs eternally in the *new Jerusalem*.

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F I N I S.

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